

# Who Preyed Upon Fashionable New York Society

## at Gregory," Impostor, Adventurer lled, Blackmailed and niring Friends

ing world came to my assistance. They knew that I was a good horseman and story teller, whatever my other faults. They knew that I was old and sick and that a term in prison would mean my speedy death. My guilt of the charge brought against me was clear, for the proof was presented in unquestionably bad checks.

When the day came and my case was called for trial before Judge Rosalsky I decided to make no denial. My attorney advised me to throw myself upon the mercy of the court, and my friends agreed to promise the judge that they would provide my steamship passage and transportation back to Austria and pay the claims of those who had complained of my transactions if Judge Rosalsky would consent to suspend sentence and order me deported from the United States.

Perhaps the most forcible arguments in my behalf were the certificates from my physicians that I was now an old man, broken in health from my excesses, and would never live to serve out any considerable prison sentence.

### The "Count" Sentenced to Five Years in Jail

All these things were laid before Judge Rosalsky, but his eye travelled slowly down the long typewritten list of my previous criminal record, and he remarked that he was inclined to feel that the ends of justice would not be served except by imposing the prison sentence which I richly deserved. But to give due weight to the affidavits of my friends, their promises to make restitution to my creditors and the certificates of my doctors that a prison sentence would amount to a sentence of death, Judge Rosalsky said that he would take the matter under advisement for a week.

When I was called to the bar of justice seven days later Judge Rosalsky looked at me for a moment with his calm, judicial eye, and then said these words, which I shall never forget:

"Gregory, you have had a long career of crime. You have lived by your wits and imposed upon your friends and acquaintances. I have here your record of previous convictions and you stand before me now a confessed criminal once more. I, therefore, sentence you to five years' imprisonment."

I gasped when I heard these words and I realized that this meant a sentence of death.

"But," continued Judge Rosalsky after an impressive pause, "I have weighed carefully the statements of your physicians that your health will not allow you to survive confinement in a prison. I am also somewhat influenced by the promise made to the court that the creditors represented in this case will be reimbursed in full and that your friends stand ready to provide the means for your return to your family in Austria."

"I have, therefore, decided to suspend sentence and order your deportation, but I warn you that if you ever return to the United States you will be taken into custody and will then be made to serve the full term of imprisonment."

I bowed with genuine gratitude, but made no comment. I richly deserved the five years' sentence which Judge Rosalsky determined upon, and yet it was true that I probably would not have lived a month in the confinement of a prison cell. Judge Rosalsky had tempered justice with mercy.

Passage was purchased for me on the Princess Matoika, of the United American lines, on October 29. The ship was bound for Bremen, Germany, and I was provided with a ticket to carry me through Germany to Vienna. An officer was detailed by Judge Rosalsky to escort me on board the ship and see that I did not leave the vessel.

And as I sit in my cabin, waiting the signal for the gangplank to be hauled ashore, I write these last lines of farewell to the readers of this page.

Adieu, America!

*B. S. Gregory*

### By the Editor:

JUDGE ROSALSKY had indeed "tempered justice with mercy," as Gregory truly says. Gregory sailed away under order of the New York court. His lifelong instinct for crime was still strong. Stopping over for a few days in Berlin on his way to Austria, Gregory swindled a hotelkeeper, was arrested, put in jail, and three days later was found dead in his cell in the city prison of Berlin.

Judge Rosalsky had not been deceived nor had he erred in his judgment that a prison sentence meant the sentence of death. Gregory's heart, enfeebled by seventy years largely devoted to excesses, gave out even sooner than his New York physicians or Judge Rosalsky had imagined.

As the ocean liner pulled clear from the wharf in New York last October, Gregory, with a profound bow, took off his pearl-gray hat and saluted those few remaining friends who had gathered to bid him good-bye. He then walked briskly to the bar, and during the remainder of the voyage was a conspicuous patron of this department of the ship.

A fellow-passenger on the Princess Matoika has kindly



### THE END OF GREGORY'S CAREER IN AMERICA

"Judge Rosalsky looked at me for a moment, then said these words, which I shall never forget:

"Gregory, you have had a long career of crime. You have lived by your wits and imposed upon your friends and acquaintances. I have here your record of previous convictions, and you stand before me now a confessed criminal once more. I therefore sentence you to five years' imprisonment!"

### Personal, Intimate Little Telegram from Eleanor Sears to "Count" Gregory.

sent the editor the following account of Gregory's trip:

"The first act of the 'Count' aboard ship was to ascertain where the bartender slept, and until the Princess Matoika docked in Bremen there was no need for the bartender to set his alarm clock. The 'Count' saw faithfully to it that he didn't oversleep. He never had the money to pay his bill at the bar in the evening, but bright and early the next morning he turned up with a new ten or twenty dollar bill and squared himself with the man in the white jacket. Apparently he engineered a successful 'touch' every night, for it was well nigh impossible to refuse the loan of a few paltry dollars to this distinguished-looking man, who, at least to some of his fellow-passengers, seemed to confer a priceless favor by merely addressing them.

A New York butcher travelling on the ship had his little son with him, and the boy became a great favorite of the 'Count,' who used to play and walk on deck with him. When, however, the father refused to advance a loan to Mr. Gregory he lost interest in the boy.

"The 'Count' understood famously how to ingratiate himself with the other passengers. At the dining table he had his chair opposite the captain, and the old seaman, as well as the other passengers around him, never stopped laughing at the funny anecdotes which the 'Count' told in an inimitable manner. Especially well-liked were his stories concerning the trimming of rich Americans which he recounted with astonishing frankness.

"Another engaging feature of the 'Count' was that he never took anything in ill humor. One of the passengers appeared one evening in a fantastic costume, wearing a puffed check suit and a monocle. Immediately every one sensed the inference and looked inquiringly at the 'Count.' But he sidled right up to the funny looking person and said: 'It seems the only difference between us two is that you have more money!' This amused everybody very much.

"When the steamer was within two days of Bremen the 'Count' started an auction of some personal belongings, among them a suit and a raincoat of very expensive make. That apparently was caused by the fact that he had exhausted his resources, or, rather, the patience of his newly won acquaintances. The clothes brought quite a tidy sum, but when the spires of Bremerhaven hove in sight Mr. Gregory was 'broke' again on account of his proclivities for the 'old Scotch.' Someone who had taken a fancy to him suggested a collection, and the result was \$35. That meant about 7,000 marks.

"Right away the 'Count' went to the butcher from New York, who is well acquainted in Bremen, and asked him for the name of the finest hotel in that city. 'Hillmann's,' replied the butcher, and Hillmann's was the first hostelry which had the honor to house the 'Count' on German soil.

"On the following day the New York butcher was busily engaged in looking the town over when he suddenly ran into the 'Count' at a corner. Mr. Gregory was looking rather sad, but as soon as he recognized his fellow passenger he seemed at once transformed into the happiest being on the face of the earth. 'Heaven has sent you,' he exclaimed, 'and you must help me!' The butcher

steeled himself against the threatening 'touch,' but Mr. Gregory had other sorrows right then. 'I've been looking into every drinking place I saw,' he continued, 'and in none of them could I find a drop of Scotch. You know the town and you ought to know where it is to be had.' The butcher knew, and five minutes later the two were seated behind a bottle of Mr. Gregory's favorite beverage.

"In a short time the 'Count' had downed half a dozen extra large highballs, whereupon he threw a hundred-mark note on the table with a carelessness that gave the impression he had a couple of wagon loads of money at his disposal."

On November 14, a few days later, the "Count" made his appearance in Berlin. There he haunted the bar of the fashionable Hotel Adlon, where he consumed Scotch whiskies and sodas as long as he had any funds.

One of the Americans whom he visited frequently in Berlin has an office in the Hotel Adlon. This man reports a curious detail about the visits of the "Count." The business man owns a very clever police dog which he keeps in his office. This dog always showed a violent antipathy to the "Count," and his master had to tie the animal up to keep him from attacking the visitor in his best police fashion.

Gregory's dress in the Adlon bar and other resorts was extremely spectacular and impressed Germans as the climax of English and American sporting fashions. His favorite costume was a long cutaway coat of check pattern with trousers to match, a bright orange waistcoat and green plaid overcoat designed for summer wear.

He evidently felt the need of a larger and warmer wardrobe, and a day or two after his arrival he went into a fashionable Berlin tailor and ordered a handsome fur overcoat for 30,000 marks. He promised, with the air of a millionaire, to pay for it with "a check on New York."

He obtained board and lodging with Mrs. Beate Anders, who conducts a refined and comfortable boarding house on Aschaffenburg-strasse, in the so-called Bavarian section of Berlin.

The "Count" impressed her very much with his stories of his familiarity with Mr. Vanderbilt and the Duke of

Westminster. This made it unnecessary for him to pay his bill and enabled him to borrow 2,000 marks from the landlady.

In order to forestall any demand for payment he made love to the widow in his most winning manner and almost won her by his persuasiveness. He painted to her the delights of living in America, just as he had allured so many American women with stories of life on his ancestral estates in Austria.

As a final inducement to Mrs. Anders—his "adored Beate"—he invited her to go to the most expensive jeweler's in Berlin and buy herself a necklace for 30,000 marks. The widow, more prudent than many American women had been, asked time to consider his flattering offer.

During that time she looked through his baggage and found that he possessed only two collars, two shirts, two handkerchiefs, one pair of shoes and two suits of underwear, in addition to the clothes he wore. This struck her as not sufficient for an American millionaire and she pressed him for payment of her bill of 8,000 marks and her loan of 2,000 marks. The latter he had spent for Scotch whiskies and at dice throwing on the Adlon bar.

He gave her a check on the Hudson Trust Company of New York, but she was warned that it was worthless and had him arrested. When he was taken to prison his last plea to Mrs. Anders was:

"Please see that I have cigarettes and something to drink or I shall die in prison."

His words were prophetic. In three days—on November 28—he died in his chilly cell in the Moabit prison from an attack of heart failure. Thus perished one of the most successful, impudent and clever impostors on record, who had imposed for fifty years successfully on the highest classes of English and American society, one whose exploits will long be discussed in clubs and drawing rooms.

Gregory lies buried in a pauper's grave, a fitting end for a man who had misapplied enormous natural talents—an end which points its own moral.

(The End)